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March 25, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D. 
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **WORK ORDER TO HIRE A CONSULTANT TO ASSIST IN THE UNIQUE,
UNIFIED PERSON IDENTIFIER SYSTEM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

This is to advise you of the Department of Health Services' (DHS) intent to request the Internal Services Department (ISD) to execute the subject Work Order in the amount of \$464,880 with Superior Consultant to obtain the services of a consultant to assist in requirements analysis, vendor selection, contract negotiations, planning, and implementation of the Unique, Unified Person Identifier (U²PI) System for the DHS and Department of Mental Health (DMH). These services will be obtained through the Information Technology Support Services Master Agreement (ITSSMA) managed by ISD. Prior notice to your Board is required because execution of this Work Order will obligate the County for more than \$300,000.

BACKGROUND

In December 2002, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County of Los Angeles Strategic Plan. Goal 7, Strategy 1 reads:

"By January 31, 2006, County departments of Health Services, Mental Health, and others achieve seamless electronic exchange of selected health and human services data among themselves and other selected County providers of related services."

The first major step in executing this strategy will be to acquire, install, and integrate a commercial, off-the-shelf Enterprise Master Person Index (EMPI) system. The system, the Unique, Unified Person Identifier (U²PI), will employ a sophisticated algorithm to assist in identifying patients. U²PI will provide a cross reference to each patient's medical record

numbers in up to six DHS Affinity systems, the Public Health Information System (PHIS), and the DMH Integrated System. With this common identifier available, systems can be implemented to share selected clinical data.

Implementation of U²PI will be phased in over several years, with each phase bringing incremental value to DHS and DMH. DHS and DMH have no experience implementing an EMPI system. To ensure an optimal solution for the County, DHS and DMH intend to use the subject Work Order to supplement the County project team with an experienced EMPI consultant.

SCOPE OF WORK

The EMPI consultant will supplement County staff in performing the following:

- Assisting the County with procuring and implementing an optimal U²PI solution.
- Assisting in research, system requirements analysis, planning, and preparing or modifying comprehensive project documentation.
- Participating in the project procurement and contract negotiation processes, providing research, expertise, and comprehensive documentation.
- Participating in the planning and execution of the EMPI implementation.
- Conducting process and outcome evaluation upon conclusion of project milestones.
- Attending Steering Committee meetings, participating in presentations, facilitating discussion and documenting project-specific decisions for project records.

JUSTIFICATION

The Los Angeles County Strategic Plan requires DHS and DMH to “implement a system for assigning and tracking a single identifier for clients receiving selected County services.” Satisfying this objective requires the acquisition of an EMPI system, which represents a long-term infrastructure investment. This is an expensive, multi-year, risky project. Twice before, DHS has attempted to acquire a system to address the patient identification problem but did not find an acceptable solution.

Currently DHS has no staff with experience implementing an EMPI system. Engaging a consultant with EMPI project implementation experience will supplement County Project staff and substantially reduce project risk. It is not feasible to budget, recruit, and hire an analyst with EMPI expertise through the normal personnel process; the skill set required is highly specialized, and the length of time required would unacceptably delay the project.

FISCAL IMPACT

The amount of the Work Order is \$464,880 and the term is 18 months from execution. Funds are available in the current DHS budget and will be requested as a continuing appropriation in future fiscal years.

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CLOSING

If no comment is received on this notice within two weeks, ISD will be asked to execute the Work Order. If there are questions regarding this matter, please let me know.

TLG:ar

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Interim Director, Internal Services Department

NOTED AND APPROVED:

Jon W. Fullinwider
County Chief Information Office

Date